

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4008

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FOR AF - EDMONDSON FROM MOOSE

DEPT PASS LONDON FOR AMB. SCHAUFLE NIACT IMMEDIATE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: RESULTS OF DEC 4 SESSION WITH  
HEADS OF DELEGATION

1. ROBIN BYATT DESCRIBED TODAY'S 2-1/4 HOUR SESSION AS A USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE ONE. THE RHODESIANS DID NOT PRESENT A PAPER OUTLINING THEIR POSITION ON THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND MOST OF THE SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO CRITIQUE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S PAPER ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. TOWARD THE END OF THE SESSION, THE CONFERENCE TURNED TO CRITICISM OF BISHOP MUZOREWA'S PROPOSAL FOR ELECTIONS. THE RHODESIANS PLAYED A SLIGHTLY MORE ACTIVE BUT STILL MINOR ROLE IN TODAY'S DISCUSSIONS.

2. GORDON CHAVANDUKA, LEADING MUZOREWA'S DELEGATION, TOOK THE LEAD IN TODAY'S DISCUSSIONS IN QUESTIONING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON THE SPECIFICS OF ITS PLAN FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. SPECIFICALLY, HE ASKED HOW THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTING A BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF MINISTER, TO BE SELECTED BY THE CONFERENCE, WOULD WORK IN PRACTICE. HE ALSO TRIED TO ELICIT FROM THE FRONT THE DEFINITION OF THE LIMITED AND RESERVED POWERS THAT WERE TO BE

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GRANTED TO THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER. ALTHOUGH

CHAVANDUKA'S QUESTIONS WERE AT TIMES CLUMSY, THE THRUST OF HIS QUESTIONING WAS DIRECT AND POINTED.

3. MUGABE AND NKOMO WERE ASSISTED BY THEIR LEGAL EXPERTS IN TRYING TO COPE WITH QUESTIONS FROM THE VARIOUS DELEGATIONS. THEIR ANSWERS, HOWEVER, DID NOT HELP MUCH IN ELUCIDATING DETAILS AND AT TIMES SEEMED DELIBERATELY VAGUE AND EVASIVE.

4. AT ONE POINT IN THE DISCUSSION, THE FRONT WAS QUESTIONED ON WHY IT HAD FAILED TO INCLUDE A REFERENDUM FOR THE PROPOSED INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION. NKOMO REPLIED THAT SUCH PROVISION OUGHT WELL BE INCLUDED PARTRIDGE OF THE RHODESIAN TEAM QUESTIONED HOW WITH ALL THESE ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS THE NATIONALISTS EXPECTED ALL THE PROCEDURES TO BE COMPLETED IN TIME TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE NO LATER THAN MARCH 1, 1978. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER IN RAISING THE DATE ISSUE PARTRIDGE WAS ATTEMPTING TO BE DELIBERATELY DISRUPTIVE. IN ANY EVENT, THE FRONT DID NOT LOSE ITS COMPOSURE OVER PARTRIDGE'S ATTEMPT TO RESURRECT THE DATE ISSUE AND MERELY STUCK TO THEIR POSITION THAT ALL OF THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES COULD AND WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE SPECIFIED DATE.

5. TOWARDS THE END OF THE SESSION, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TABLED A PAPER CRITICIZING IN STRONG TERMS MUZOREWA'S PROPOSALS FOR ELECTIONS FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THE CONFERENCE RECESSED FOR 15 MINUTES TO ALLOW DELEGATIONS TO READ THE DOCUMENT. WHEN THE MEETING RESUMED, CHAVANDUKA REJECTED A CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT IN ORDER TO DEFEND HIS DELEGATION'S PROPOSALS. HE INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NO REASON ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE HELD, GIVEN THE GOODWILL OF ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

6. VAN DER BYL HAD INFORMED THE BRITISH THAT HE WOULD NOT, AS PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED, BE ABLE TO SUBMIT A PAPER OUTLINING THE RHODESIAN POSITION AT TODAY'S SESSION, NOR WAS HE SURE THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO ON MONDAY. HE NOW SAYS THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR HIM TO CLEAR THE STATEMENT WITH SALISBURY.

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7. ONE INTERESTING FOOTNOTE TO TODAY'S SESSION WAS MUGABE'S PROTEST OVER THE STATEMENT VAN DER BYL HAD MADE DURING THE DEC 3 SESSION, ALLEGING THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DID NOT WISH TO SEE ANY WHITES PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. MUGABE ARGUED THAT VAN DER BYL HAD DISTORTED THE FRONT'S POSITION. VAN DER BYL, AFTER LISTENING TO MUGABE'S EX-

PLANATION, ADMITTED THAT HE HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THE FRONT'S POSITION, WITHDREW HIS STATEMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS DAY AND APOLOGIZED TO MUGABE, WHO GRACEFULLY ACCEPTED.

8. THE BRITISH WERE SATISFIED WITH TODAY'S SESSION, PARTICULARLY SINCE MOST OF THE INTERACTION WAS AMONG THE DELEGATIONS, AND THEY WERE NOT FORCED TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ADMIT THAT DISCUSSIONS HAD NOT REALLY TAKEN THEM VERY FAR. MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NATIONALISTS AND THE RHODESIANS HAVE NOT YET BEEN RAISED IN THE DISCUSSIONS. MOREOVER, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE DELEGATIONS ARE STICKING RESOLUTELY TO THEIR RESPECTIVE PROPOSALS.

9. THE BRITISH HAVE SCHEDULED ANOTHER SESSION WITH HEADS OF DELEGATIONS FOR MONDAY AFTERNOON. ON MONDAY MORNING THEY PLAN TO HAVE BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH BOTH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND THE MUZOREWA DELEGATIONS, SPECIFICALLY TO DISCUSS THEIR IDEAS ABOUT THE BRITISH ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE IN DETAIL IN THE LARGER SESSIONS FOR FEAR OF INVITING THE RHODESIANS TO QUESTION THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXPANDED BRITISH ROLE. THERE WILL BE NO FULL SESSION ON TUESDAY BECAUSE OF IVOR RICHARD'S RETURN TO LONDON FOR CONSULTATIONS. THE BRITISH HOPE TO HOLD MORE BILATERAL TALKS DURING HIS ABSENCE ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. AT THIS POINT, THEY HAVE NOT EVOLVED A STRATEGY FOR CONTINUING THE DISCUSSIONS LATER IN THE WEEK. CATTO

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TRANSPORTATION, INTERIM GOVERNMENT, INDEPENDENCE, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, COMMUNICATION LINES, CAT-B, MEETING PROCEEDINGS, NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976GENEVA09670  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** P840099-0866  
**From:** GENEVA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761272/aaaacjza.tel  
**Line Count:** 145  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** saccheem  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 14 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by woolfhd>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by saccheem>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RHODESIA CONFERENCE: RESULTS OF DEC 4 SESSION WITH HEADS OF DELEGATION  
**TAGS:** EAID, PFOR, PDEV, RH, UK  
**To:** STATE SS LONDON  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006